

Tips for Social Media

When promoting your National Prevention Week events and activities, it is vital to maximize your efforts by regularly engaging with your intended audience effectively. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and other social networking sites can help you reach a large audience quickly at minimal or no cost. If your group or organization has social media accounts, then it is likely that you are already using them to promote your work.

RULE OF THUMB

Keep things short and include visuals!

Some principles to follow when planning promotional activities on social media include:

- Invest the time in developing strong promotional content: brief messages, graphics, or videos.
- Manage a social media editorial content calendar to maintain active and engaged accounts.
- Respond to and engage with comments accordingly.
- Ask staff members or volunteers who have personal accounts to help promote the activities and events through their personal profiles.

The following are more in-depth social media strategies and tools you can use to promote your event.

#HASHTAGS

To begin your social media outreach, create a hashtag for your efforts. Use your event name, a key phrase, or your theme for the year and consistently include it at the end of your posts about your National Prevention Week event. You can also include the National Prevention Week hashtag, #NPW2017, to share information about your event. Using this hashtag will also bring your event into the national conversation about National Prevention Week.

Tip: While hashtags originated on Twitter, it is very common and helpful to use them on Facebook and Instagram too! Instagram is known for the use of a variety of hashtags, and many users include multiple hashtags in a post to pull in new audiences.

OUTREACH TO BLOGGERS AND OTHER ONLINE INFLUENCERS

Bloggers in your community can be very influential, especially if they have a large or devoted local following. Identify and contact a community blogger or local online influencer who writes about community news or events, and see if he or she would be willing to highlight your National Prevention Week efforts. Make sure that the e-mail message to each blogger or influencer is personalized to prevent it from being perceived as mass e-mail or spam. Taking the time to tailor the message to the recipient helps establish and maintain the relationship. Also, be sure to supply any blogger or influencer you contact with clear, compelling information as well as graphic content, if available, so that he or she can share an accurate summary of the upcoming event and your group's or organization's efforts in the community.

FACEBOOK

This popular social network has many options for publicizing your event and efforts. If your organization has a Facebook page, you can keep friends, local businesses, and members of the community in the loop about your **National Prevention Week** plans by regularly updating your Facebook profile status with new information and event reminders. Include visuals as much as possible in posts to attract attention to your content. Include links to your group's or organization's website, as well as the websites of your sponsors or partners. You can also link to partners' and sponsors' Facebook pages by typing their Facebook name in your posts and selecting their pages from the dropdown menu.

You can also create a Facebook event page and send invitations to your network as well as to your current and potential partners. Once an event page is created, you can update the details on a regular basis and people can "Share" the event with others to spread the word throughout their own networks. Invitees can also respond to the page by letting you know whether they plan to attend your event.

The Facebook Live feature is a great tool for promoting an event in real time. Through Facebook Live, available on any Facebook page, you can capture behind-the-scenes moments and draw more attention to the event and your mission. Your followers are also notified of Live events—the longer a video is live, the more viewers that will potentially be engaged!

Another great way to leverage the Facebook Live feature is to hold a live Q&A and have viewers submit their questions directly within the live feed. You can then answer questions in real time. Live videos can be archived for additional views after the event.

Added Features to Consider

Create a Facebook **Call to Action**! Post the SAMHSA Prevention Pledge on your Facebook page (see SAMHSA's Facebook page for the pledge: <http://www.facebook.com/samhsa>) to share information about this national commitment to healthy living and engage participation!

You can also create a Facebook **contest or challenge** by soliciting user-generated messages, videos, public service announcements, or answers to trivia questions and then offering prizes. For National Prevention Week 2017, SAMHSA will be posting monthly #PreventionPower challenges on social media. Extend the month's challenge to your community.

For more information about the #PreventionPower challenge, go to <http://www.SAMHSA.gov/prevention-week>.

TWITTER

This platform allows for easy updates and information-sharing in 140 characters or less. Posts on Twitter are called "tweets." Because you can only include a limited number of characters in each post, focus on a call to action and positive message, local and related statistics, or the most important information about your National Prevention Week activities and events.

Note that photos and videos no longer count toward character limits—allowing for more promotional content to be shared. Post information and frequent updates about your event, and link to your organization's or group's website to provide followers with more information. Remember to include your promotional hashtag at the end of your tweets about your **National Prevention Week** event, and be sure to include the **National Prevention Week** hashtag #PreventionPower.

Also, do not forget to follow local leaders and community influencers to thoughtfully bring them into the conversation.

YOUTUBE

This video site can be used in creative ways to share information about your group or organization, your work in the community, or your upcoming **National Prevention Week** plans. You can create a single video or an entire YouTube channel and include promotional videos, testimonials about your group or organization, or highlights of your event footage (in the preparation stages or post-event). Whether your video is promotional, informative, or educational, it should include information about your upcoming event and encourage others to take action to prevent substance misuse and promote mental health.

Spur your imagination by viewing videos on the SAMHSA YouTube [channel](#). To promote your video, include a link to the YouTube video or YouTube channel in your Facebook posts and tweets, and embed your videos in your group's or organization's website to share your creativity with a larger audience. If your video is 15 seconds or less, you can also upload and share it through your Instagram account.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a visually oriented, highly engaged social media platform where you can upload, caption, and tag images and short videos using hashtags to help promote your organization and your National Prevention Week plans.

In late 2016, Instagram introduced Stories, a feature that lets you share all the moments of your day, not just the ones you want to keep on your profile. As you share multiple photos and videos, they appear together in a slideshow format as your story. You can bring your story to life in new ways with text and drawing tools. The photos and videos will disappear after 24 hours and will not appear on your profile grid or in your feed.

Before National Prevention Week, you should develop a posting schedule and identify photos or images to post at least once a week. For example, you might post an image of the flyer advertising your event or a photo of the volunteers or staff who are helping to plan the event. Through your posts, you can tell a story to build excitement and make your followers feel involved in the “behind the scenes” activities of your event. In 2017, Instagram added a feature that allows you to add multiple photos or videos to a single post, giving you a greater opportunity for creativity in building a narrative.

Have fun and play around with the photo filters that Instagram provides to appeal to different audiences, and create a special look that people will associate with your organization and your mission.

As with other social media, use the designated hashtag for your event or the hashtag #PreventionPower in your captions. This will allow Instagram to display all the photos related to your event when users click on the hashtag.

SNAPCHAT

Snapchat has risen to become the most active social media platform among users ages 13 to 25. Snapchat allows users to add captions, drawings, and filters to their photos and videos (also known as “snaps”). Unlike other messaging apps, you can view snaps for a maximum of 10 seconds, and then they are gone for good—unless, of course, you saved a copy.

In addition to sending followers individual photos and videos, you can use your account’s Stories feature. Like a snap, Stories can be photos and videos. The difference is that you can post a story to your feed, which can be seen by you and your friends. Stories were designed to show your friends what you have been up to in the last day. They exist for 24 hours and can be replayed as many times as you want.

Before National Prevention Week, you should develop a posting schedule and identify activities that you can post photos or videos of each day. For example, you might post an image of the flyer advertising your event, along with a video of the volunteers or staff who are helping to plan the event. Through your posts, you can tell a story to build excitement and make your followers feel involved in the “behind the scenes” activities of your event.

Have fun and play around with the various filters and speeds that Snapchat provides to appeal to different audiences. If you are hosting a single event, you can also design and create your very own [Snapchat Geofilter](#) that attendees at your event can use on their personal snaps to show they were there.

Unlike other social media, using a designated hashtag for your event in your caption is not as vital to this platform.

TIMING YOUR POSTS

For events, begin posting about your **National Prevention Week** plans on social media platforms as soon as you confirm a date and location. As planning progresses, post more details to generate buzz about your event. In the two months leading up to your event, post more frequently and perhaps on a weekly basis, and in the final week, post daily reminders. Consider encouraging partner organizations and sponsors to post reminders on their social media profiles as well during the final week.

During **National Prevention Week 2017**, each day will have a designated prevention theme (see schedule below). When applicable, consider using the themes to help develop your events and activities as well as your social media posts.

- **Monday, May 15:** Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use
- **Tuesday, May 16:** Prevention of Underage Drinking and Alcohol Misuse
- **Wednesday, May 17:** Prevention of Prescription and Opioid Drug Misuse
- **Thursday, May 18:** Prevention of Illicit Drug Use and Youth Marijuana Use
- **Friday, May 19:** Prevention of Suicide
- **Saturday, May 20:** Promotion of Mental Health and Wellness